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EFFECTIVE FUNCTIONING OF HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS: NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND REGIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

Regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights in the Asian and Pacific region

Report of the Secretary-General submitted in accordance with Commission resolution 1999/69

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Introduction

1. In its resolution 1999/69, the Commission on Human Rights requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Commission at its fifty-sixth session a report containing the conclusions of the Eighth Workshop on Regional Arrangements for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Asian and Pacific Region and information on the progress achieved in implementing the resolution. The present report is submitted in accordance with that request.

2. One of the fundamental objectives of the United Nations is to promote universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms. The United Nations has consistently promoted regional cooperation in the Asian and Pacific region for the achievement of this objective, inter alia through the consideration of possible regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights. The General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights have adopted numerous resolutions in this regard. The World Conference on Human Rights reaffirmed the fundamental role that regional and subregional arrangements could play in promoting and protecting human rights.

3. Pursuant to the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Commission, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, within the framework of the programme of technical cooperation and advisory services in the field of human rights, organized in 1982 a seminar in Colombo and, more recently, eight workshops for the Asian and Pacific region, in cooperation with the host Governments, in Manila in 1990, Jakarta in 1993, Seoul in 1994, Katmandu in 1996, Amman in 1997, Tehran in 1998, New Delhi in 1999 and Beijing in 2000.

4. Through these workshops, a consensus has been reached on the principles and a "step-by-step", "building-blocks" approach involving extensive consultation among Governments of the region, concerning the possible establishment of regional arrangements.

5. The Amman workshop concluded, inter alia, that the sharing of information and the development and strengthening of national capacities for the promotion and protection of human rights are crucial in the step-by-step process of establishing regional human rights arrangements. The workshop also strongly recommended that a regional technical cooperation programme be designed and implemented as a matter of urgent priority.

6. The Tehran workshop carried this process forward and adopted for the first time agreed conclusions. Underlining its commitment to developing and strengthening national capacities, in accordance with national conditions, for the promotion and protection of human rights through regional cooperation and sharing of experiences, the workshop adopted a framework for regional technical cooperation in the Asian and Pacific region designed to develop, inter alia, national plans of action for the promotion and protection of human rights and the strengthening of national capacities; human rights education; national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights; and strategies for the realization of the right to development and economic, social and cultural rights.

7. The New Delhi workshop reviewed progress since Tehran in the four areas identified in the Framework for Regional Technical Cooperation in the Asian and Pacific Region. The

workshop also identified the next steps to be taken to facilitate the process of establishing regional cooperation for the promotion and protection of human rights and possible regional arrangements. The workshop decided to convene inter-sessional workshops addressing issues under each of the four areas of the Framework for Regional Technical Cooperation and welcomed the decision of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to allocate funds for the projects foreseen within the Framework.

8. During the one-year period between the New Delhi and the Beijing workshops the following inter-sessional workshops were convened: Inter-Sessional Regional Workshop on National Human Rights Action Plans, Bangkok, 5-7 July 1999; Inter-Sessional Subregional Workshop on Human Rights Education in North-East Asia, Seoul, 1-4 December 1999; Inter-Sessional Subregional Workshop on National Plans of Action for Human Rights Education, Tokyo, 17-19 January 2000; Inter-Sessional Workshop on the Realization of the Right to Development and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Sana'a, 5-7 February 2000. Activities relating to the national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights are described in document E/CN.4/2000/103.

I. INTER-SESSIONAL REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS ACTION PLANS, BANGKOK, 5-7 JULY 1999

9. The objectives of the workshop were: (a) to identify the central and common purposes of national human rights action plans; (b) to formulate strategies, based on lessons learned from prior practical experience which best serve to ensure the creation of comprehensive, effective and sustainable national human rights action plans, including strategies for implementation and national evaluation; (c) to identify the key components and priorities of a national plan of action.

10. In preparation for the workshop, an open-ended team, comprising Geneva-based representatives of interested Member States from the Asian and Pacific region, held two consultative meetings in Geneva in June 1999. After consultations in Geneva, invitations to the workshop were sent to the Governments of States of the region, national institutions which are members of the Asia-Pacific Forum, non-governmental organizations active in the region and in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, and regional intergovernmental organizations were also invited to participate as observers. In addition, United Nations and other international agencies and embassies in Bangkok were invited to attend as observers. Resource persons were identified to make presentations at the workshop.

11. The workshop was attended by the following 28 Governments: Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, China, Cyprus, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Japan, Lao People's Republic, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Viet Nam and Yemen. A representative of Palestine also attended. The seven national institutions from the region which are members of the Asia-Pacific Forum participated in the workshop, as observers, as did a number of NGOs. As agreed during consultations in Geneva, the Asia-Pacific Human Rights NGOs Facilitating Team also participated along with representatives of a number of United Nations agencies.

12. The workshop was opened by M.R. Sukhumbhand Paribatra, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, and Justice Bhagwati, Regional Adviser on International Human Rights Standards for the Asian and Pacific region to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, representing the High Commissioner. The workshop was divided into seven sessions:

1. The concept and purposes of a national plan of action.

2. Lessons learned from prior experiences.

3. Developing a national plan of action.

4. The role of civil society.

5. Priorities and implementation.

6. Obstacles to the development and implementation.

7. The way forward.

13. The workshop, by consensus, adopted conclusions. Participants recognized the desirability of developing national human rights action plans and agreed that there were commonalties in the goals and objectives of national human rights action plans. Nevertheless, it was emphasized that national priorities and circumstances would vary from one country to another. It was agreed that broad national participation played a key role in the development, implementation and evaluation of national human rights action plans. Governments which had not already done so were encouraged to consider initiating a national plan. Participants also affirmed that inter-sessional workshops were valuable in enhancing regional cooperation. Participants formulated a list of "possible elements to facilitate the development of national action plans for the promotion and protection of human rights that could be considered by countries which wish to include a national plan of action as part of their approach to human rights observance" (hereafter "possible elements").

II. INTER-SESSIONAL SUBREGIONAL WORKSHOP ON HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION IN NORTH-EAST ASIA, SEOUL, 1-4 DECEMBER 1999

14. The objectives of the workshop were: (a) to develop a common understanding of human rights education in schools; (b) to discuss strategies based on lessons learned from other countries, for the effective incorporation of human rights education in the school system; (c) to identify key components and subregional and national priorities for human rights education programmes in schools; (d) to facilitate subregional cooperation in the area of human rights education among relevant partners (Governments, national institutions, educational institutes and NGOs); (e) to develop national and subregional plans for human rights education in schools.

15. In preparation for the workshop, an open-ended team, comprising Geneva-based representatives of interested member States from the Asian and Pacific region, held consultations in Geneva. After consultations in Geneva, invitations to the workshop were sent to States of the

subregion, non-governmental organizations active in the subregion and in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, and regional intergovernmental organizations. In addition, United Nations and other international agencies and embassies in Seoul were invited to attend as observers.

16. The workshop was attended by participants from China, Japan, Mongolia and the Republic of Korea, most of whom were professionals concerned with human rights education in schools. At the invitation of the host Government, a regional human rights centre, HURIGHTS Osaka, and the Republic of Korea National Commission for UNESCO played a significant role in facilitating the workshop. A number of other national, regional and international non-governmental organizations also participated as observers, together with representatives of United Nations agencies.

17. The workshop was divided into four working groups addressing the four principal workshop themes:

1. Training of teachers and other education personnel.

2. Curriculum development and extracurricular activities.

3. Policy issues.

4. Human rights education in the classroom.

18. The workshop, by consensus, adopted a declaration. The declaration concludes that in the subregion there is a common understanding that human rights education in schools is based on universally recognized human rights standards and relevant national education policies and legislation. In this regard, human rights education should be understood to cover the whole range of civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights and the right to development, and, in this regard, human rights education should be consistent with the principles and articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Declaration affirms the importance of developing human rights education programmes in a participatory manner, incorporating inputs of teachers, students, institutes, Government and non-governmental organizations, and the importance of regional and subregional initiatives is also affirmed. The Declaration contains a number of detailed recommendations concerning each of the four principal workshop themes. It states that the implementation of all recommendations should constitute part of a comprehensive (in terms of outreach), effective (in terms of education strategies) and sustainable (over the long term) national strategy under a national plan of action for human rights education, in accordance with the Guidelines for national plans of action for human rights education.

III. INTER-SESSIONAL SUBREGIONAL WORKSHOP ON NATIONAL PLANS OF ACTION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION, TOKYO, 17-19 JANUARY 2000

19. The objectives of the workshop were: (a) to identify the central role and common purposes of national plans of action for human rights education at the national and regional levels, (b) to encourage States to develop, implement or review national action plans for human

rights education, (c) to promote and strengthen cooperation among States in the Asian and Pacific region with national institutions and NGOs active in the area thereby encouraging regional cooperation, national participation and consensus in the development of national plans of action for human rights education.

20. In preparation for the workshop, an open-ended team, comprising Geneva-based representatives of interested member States from the Asian and Pacific region, held one consultative meeting in Geneva. After consultations in Geneva, invitations to the workshop were sent to States of the region, national institutions which are members of the Asia-Pacific Forum, non-governmental organizations active in the region and in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, and regional intergovernmental organizations were invited as observers. In addition, United Nations and other international agencies and embassies in Tokyo were invited to attend as observers. Resource persons were identified to make presentations at the workshop.

21. The workshop was attended by the following 27 Governments: Australia, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Fiji, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam and Yemen. Five of the seven national institutions from the region which are members of the Asia-Pacific Forum participated in the workshop. A number of non-governmental organizations participated as observers as did representatives of United Nations agencies.

22. The workshop was divided into five sessions:

1. The purposes of human rights education and human rights education action plans.

2. Practical experiences and lessons learned.

3. Development of a national human rights education action plan.

4. Implementing and reviewing national human rights education action plans.

5. The way forward – emerging issues in the region.

23. The workshop, by consensus, adopted conclusions. Participants reiterated that participatory, pluralistic and non-discriminatory human rights education provides a foundation for the realization of all human rights for all, and recognized that national plans of action for human rights education were important for building a human rights culture, providing focus and a common framework for carrying out various human rights education activities, and assisting the mobilization of adequate resources to meet national needs. The conclusions recognize the desirability of developing and implementing national plans of action for human rights education in a pluralistic and participatory manner, involving government agencies, members of civil society and national human rights institutions. The conclusions reaffirm that national plans of action for human rights education must be multifaceted and multidimensional and based upon needs assessment and country priorities, drawing on relevant networks, experiences and

programmes. The conclusions also recognize that the global mid-term review of progress towards achieving the objectives of the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004), scheduled for the year 2000, provides an important occasion for undertaking an assessment of national plans, programmes and activities for human rights education, with a view to strengthening them and effectively meeting the needs of government agencies, civil society including NGOs and vulnerable groups.

IV. INTER-SESSIONAL WORKSHOP ON THE REALIZATION OF THE RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS, SANA'A, 5-7 FEBRUARY, 2000

24. The objective of the workshop was to focus on the implementation of economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development and on steps to be taken in this regard at the national and international levels and, in particular on the following: (a) issues relating to international cooperation including quantifiable benchmarks for the implementation of the right to development; (b) identifying obstacles to the realization of the right to development and economic, social and cultural rights; (c) proposing relevant actions to strengthen national capacities for the promotion and protection of these rights.

25. In preparation for the workshop, an open-ended team, comprising Geneva-based representatives of interested Member States from the Asian and Pacific region, held consultations in Geneva, after which invitations to the workshop were sent to States of the region, national institutions which are members of the Asia-Pacific Forum non-governmental organizations active in the region and in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council and intergovernmental organizations were invited to participate as observers. In addition, United Nations and other international agencies and embassies in Sana'a were invited to attend as observers. Resource persons were identified to make presentations at the workshop.

26. The workshop was attended by the following 27 Governments: Australia, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Fiji, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam and Yemen. Of the seven national institutions from the region which are members of the Asia-Pacific Forum, three participated in the workshop. A number of non-governmental organizations participated as observers as did representatives of United Nations agencies.

27. The workshop was opened by Mr. Abdul Karim Ali Al-Eryani, Prime Minister of Yemen, and Mrs. Mary Robinson, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The workshop was divided into six substantive sessions:

1. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

2. The Covenant and the HURIST programme.

3. Introduction to background paper on the right to development.

4 The right to development and the international financial institutions

5 Development cooperation

6 Economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development

28 The workshop, by consensus, adopted conclusions and recommendations. In the conclusions the participants committed themselves to developing and strengthening national capacities, in accordance with national conditions and national needs, for the realization of economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development, and affirmed that effective, meaningful public participation, with the full participation of women on an equal footing, of civil society, including national non-governmental organizations and the private sector, is an essential component of successful and sustainable development, and of the implementation of the rights to development. They noted obstacles to the realization of economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development in the region, such as extreme poverty, environmental degradation, excessive foreign debt, unilateral coercive measures, imbalances in the international trade regime, limited access to technology and socio-economic marginalization. The participants also reaffirmed that international cooperation is a necessity deriving from the recognized mutual interest of all countries and that such cooperation should therefore be strengthened in order, inter alia, support financially and technologically the efforts of developing countries to solve their social and economic problems and to assist them, wherever possible, in the fulfilment of their obligations with regard to the promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. The recommendations also include a number of specific proposals for action.

V. THE EIGHTH WORKSHOP ON REGIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE ASIAN AND PACIFIC REGION

29 The objective of the workshop was to review progress achieved since the New Delhi Workshop, in the four areas identified in the Framework for Technical Cooperation. The workshop also sought to identify next steps and propose options in the context of regional cooperation. In particular the workshop:

(a) Reviewed follow-up action concerning the Framework for Technical Cooperation agreed upon in Tehran and, in particular:

(i) Results of the inter-sessional workshop in Bangkok on national human rights action plans;

(ii) Results of the subregional workshop in Seoul on human rights education;

(iii) Results of Asia-Pacific Forum meetings on national institutions in Colombo and Manila;

(iv) Results of the inter-sessional workshop in Tokyo on national action plans for human rights education;

(v) Results of the inter-sessional workshop on development and economic, social and cultural rights in Sana'a;

(b) Identify the next steps to be taken by Governments of the region in order to facilitate the process of regional cooperation for the promotion and protection of human rights and action at the regional, subregional and national levels, including through national institutions and representatives of civil societies;

(c) Discuss issues relating to the regional preparatory meeting for the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance.

30. In preparation for the workshop, an open-ended team, comprising Geneva-based representatives of interested Member States from the region, held two consultative meetings in Geneva, after which invitations to the workshop were sent to States of the region; to national institutions which are members of the Asia-Pacific Forum, non-governmental organizations active in the region and in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, and United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations and agencies were invited to participate as observers. In addition, United Nations and other international agencies and embassies in Beijing were invited to attend as observers. Resource persons were identified to make presentations at the workshop.

31. The workshop was attended by representatives from the following 40 Governments: Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Bahrain, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Cyprus, Fiji, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Tonga, United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam and Yemen. A representative of Palestine also attended. Of the seven national institutions from the region which are members of the Asia-Pacific Forum, four participated in the workshop, together with a representative of the Asia-Pacific Forum. A number of non-governmental organizations participated as observers, as did representatives of United Nations agencies.

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32. The workshop was opened by Mr. Qian Qichen, Vice Premier of the People's Republic of China, and Mrs. Mary Robinson, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. A message of congratulations from Mr. Jiang Zemin, President of the People's Republic of China, was delivered by Mr. Wang Guangya, Vice Foreign Minister. The workshop was divided into six substantive sessions:

1. National plans of action for the promotion and protection of human rights and the strengthening of national human rights capacities;

2. National institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights;

3. Strategies for the realization of the right to development and economic, social and cultural rights;

4. Human rights education.

5. Issues relating to the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance and regional preparatory meetings.

6. Framework for Technical Cooperation: identification of next steps at the regional, subregional and national levels, including through the involvement of national institutions and representatives of civil society.

Conclusions

33. The workshop adopted conclusions, the text of which are annexed to this report. The conclusions affirm the importance of the implementation of technical cooperation in the Asian and Pacific region pursuant to the Framework for Regional Technical Cooperation established at Tehran, with the support of the international community, including through the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights, as one of the key components of the promotion of human rights in the region. They emphasize the importance of undertaking activities under the Framework for Regional Technical Cooperation at national and subregional levels with the assistance of the concerned Governments, national institutions and civil society. In this regard, the conclusions acknowledge the importance of Governments undertaking regional, subregional and national activities for the implementation of the technical cooperation in the region in accordance with the Framework of Regional Technical Cooperation in partnership with parliaments, national institutions, relevant experts and civil society organizations.

34. The conclusions note that within each of the areas of the Framework for Regional Technical Cooperation, it is appropriate to pay close attention to the promotion and protection of the rights of women, children and vulnerable groups; furthermore, they invite parliaments, national institutions and civil society groups to participate, as appropriate in the development and implementation of the Framework.

35. The conclusions endorse the paper by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on next steps and activities to be considered in the Asian and Pacific region to facilitate the process of regional cooperation for the protection and promotion of human rights, containing proposals for activities to be implemented over a two-year period, and call upon OHCHR to report on progress achieved in implementation of technical cooperation in the region in accordance with the Framework for Technical Cooperation to the next Asia-Pacific Workshop.

36. Activities proposed in the "next steps" paper at the regional level are:

(a) Finalization and distribution of the Handbook on National Human Rights Action Plans to key beneficiaries;

(b) A survey on human rights education;

(c) A study on non-formal human rights education;

(d) A meeting of the Asia-Pacific Forum on the role of national institutions in combating racism;

(e) Training on protection approaches by national institutions;

(f) A workshop on the impact of globalization/international development cooperation;

(g) A regional preparatory meeting on the World Conference.

37. Action proposed at the subregional level:

(a) A workshop on national human rights planning with experts to adopt a pilot methodology;

(b) A workshop on human rights for parliaments;

(c) Activities to promote national human rights action plans and national capacity-building;

(d) Workshops on human rights education-related issues;

(e) A workshop on human rights for the judiciary;

(f) Activities for effective human rights education;

(g) Workshops on the role of national institutions with respect to women's rights and on the media's role in human rights education;

(h) A workshop on national institutions and economic, social and cultural rights;

(i) A workshop on ratification of economic, social and cultural rights to adopt a pilot methodology;

(j) A workshop with national planning authorities on integrating human rights;

(k) An expert seminar for the World Conference.

38. Action proposed at the national level:

(a) Support for the Governments of Thailand, Mongolia, Nepal and Jordan on their national human rights action plans;

(b) Support for technical cooperation activities in the areas of national human rights action plans, capacity-building, establishment or strengthening of national institutions, human rights education, economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development.

39. The workshop took note of the offers made by the Governments of Thailand and Mongolia to host the next annual workshop.

Annex

CONCLUSIONS OF THE EIGHTH WORKSHOP ON REGIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE ASIAN AND PACIFIC REGION

(Beijing, 1 - 3 March, 2000)

Representatives of Governments of the Asian and Pacific region participating, together with representatives of the national human rights institutions and non-governmental organizations attending as observers, in the Beijing Workshop held from 1 to 3 March 2000,

Recalling the important contributions made and conclusions adopted by previous workshops and, in particular, the New Delhi Workshop held in 1999 and the inter-sessional workshops on the four areas identified under the Tehran Framework for Regional Technical Cooperation,

Reaffirming the universality, indivisibility, interdependence and interrelatedness of all human rights - civil, cultural, economic, political, social - and the right to development,

Reiterating the importance of an inclusive, step-by-step, practical and building-blocks approach towards enhancing regional cooperation for the promotion and protection of human rights,

Recalling that, according to the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights, the international community must treat human rights globally in a fair and equal manner, on the same footing and with the same emphasis, and that while the significance of the national and regional particularities and various historical, cultural and religious backgrounds must be borne in mind, it is the duty of States, regardless of their political, economic and cultural system, to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Recognizing that democracy, development and respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms are interdependent and mutually reinforcing,

Recalling paragraph 32 of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action which reaffirms the importance of ensuring the universality, objectivity and non-selectivity of the consideration of all human rights issues,

Committed to enhancing regional and international cooperation to promote universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Mindful of the vastness of and diversities within the Asian and Pacific region,

Welcoming the participation of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in the Beijing Workshop,

Recalling that at the New Delhi Workshop the Office of the High Commissioner was called upon, inter alia, to develop and implement the proposals made at that Workshop in the four areas of the Framework for Regional Technical Cooperation,

Having reviewed the progress achieved so far in implementing the Framework for Regional Technical Cooperation in the Asian and Pacific region,

Noting the significance of meeting five years after the holding in Beijing of the Fourth World Conference on Women and in Copenhagen of the World Summit for Social Development,

Reaffirming the need for effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action on the promotion and protection of the rights of women,

Hereby:

1. Express appreciation to the Government of China for hosting the Workshop and for the message of congratulations from President Jiang Zemin, the statement of Mr. Qian Qichen, Vice Premier, as well as for the statement of Mrs. Mary Robinson, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights;

2. Welcome the implementation since the New Delhi Workshop of the proposals made at that Workshop;

3. Express appreciation to the Governments, national institutions, experts, representatives of civil society and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights for the successful implementation of those proposals;

4. Endorse and call upon Governments and their partners to further the implementation of the conclusions adopted at the inter-sessional workshops and, in particular:

(a) With regard to national human rights plans of action and national capacity-building:

(i) Take note of those States that are already implementing national plans of action and of the efforts of those States which are in the process of developing national human rights plans of action;

(ii) Reaffirm the desirability of developing national human rights plans of action;

(iii) Recognize that the development and implementation of national human rights plans of action, both comprehensive and thematic, may advance the promotion and protection of human rights;

(iv) Reaffirm that broad national participation has a key role in the development, implementation and evaluation of national human rights plans of action;

(v) Recognize that plans of action in specific areas contribute towards the development of national human rights plans of action;

(b) With regard to human rights education:

(i) Recognize that human rights education can play a positive role in enhancing respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and can contribute to the promotion of human rights and sustainable development and the prevention of human rights violations;

(ii) Recognize also that human rights education programmes should include all human rights, civil, cultural, economic, political, social and the right to development;

(iii) Reiterate that participatory, pluralistic and non-discriminatory human rights education provides a foundation for the realization of all human rights for all;

(iv) Take note of the desirability of initiating national plans of action for human rights education as a component of, or complementary to, national human rights plans of action and other relevant plans of action;

(v) Recognize that human rights education for all those involved in the administration of justice may be regarded as one of the priorities in the countries of the region and that priority should also be given to meeting the human rights education needs of vulnerable, disadvantaged and marginalized groups;

(c) With regard to national human rights institutions:

(i) Welcome the efforts of States interested in establishing national human rights institutions;

(ii) Reaffirm that the status and responsibilities of national institutions should be consistent with the Principles relating to the status of national institutions welcomed by the United Nations General Assembly (resolution 48/134);

(iii) Reaffirm that national human rights institutions should be established following an appropriate and inclusive process of consultation and be independent, pluralistic and based on universal human rights standards;

(iv) Reaffirm the importance of the role played by national institutions in addressing the violations of and promoting respect for the human rights of women and children and the importance of the full participation of national institutions during the preparatory phase of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance and during the Conference itself,

(d) With regard to the realization of the right to development and economic, social and cultural rights

(i) Reaffirm their commitment to developing and strengthening national capacities, in accordance with national conditions and national needs, for the realization of economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development;

(ii) Reaffirm also that effective and meaningful public participation, with the full participation of women on an equal footing, of civil society, including national non-governmental organizations, and the private sector, is an essential component of successful and sustainable development, and of the implementation of the right to development;

(iii) Reaffirm that international cooperation is a necessity deriving from the recognized mutual interest of all countries and, therefore, that such cooperation should be strengthened in order to, inter alia, support financially and technologically the efforts of developing countries to solve their social and economic problems and to assist them, wherever possible, in the fulfilment of their obligations with regard to the promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms;

(iv) Note the discussions on all obstacles to the realization of economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development and consider that international peace and security are essential elements for the realization of the right to development;

(v) Recall the annex to the conclusions of the inter-sessional workshop on the realization of the right to development and economic, social and cultural rights held in Sana'a, in which it is stated that subregional workshops, involving national planning authorities, relevant ministries and representatives of civil society, should be held before the Ninth Workshop on Regional Arrangements for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Asian and Pacific Region in 2001 to explore means to integrate human rights in national development plans;

(e) With regard to the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance:

(i) Express their profound concern at and unequivocal condemnation of all forms of racism and racial discrimination, including related acts of racially motivated violence, xenophobia and related intolerance, as well as propaganda activities and organizations which attempt to justify or promote racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance in any form;

(ii) Express support for the decision to hold the World Conference in 2001;

(iii) Note that in each of the four areas of the Framework for Regional Technical Cooperation for the Asian and Pacific Region it is appropriate to undertake activities in support of action to combat racism and related forms of discrimination;

(iv) Welcome the offer made by the Islamic Republic of Iran to host an Asian regional preparatory meeting for the World Conference as well as the discussions held at the workshop and express support for additional initiatives linked to the Framework for Regional Technical Cooperation being undertaken in the region;

Participants in the Beijing Workshop thus:

5. Affirm the importance of the implementation of technical cooperation in the Asian and Pacific region pursuant to the Framework for Regional Technical Cooperation established at Tehran, with the support of the international community, including through the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights, as one of the key components of the promotion of human rights in the Asian and Pacific region;

6. Recognize the close relationship between and mutually supporting nature of the activities undertaken within the Framework for Regional Technical Cooperation for the Asian and Pacific Region, and otherwise, in the region for the promotion and protection of human rights;

7. Emphasize the importance of undertaking activities under the Framework for Regional Technical Cooperation for the Asian and Pacific Region at the national and subregional levels with the assistance of the concerned Governments, national institutions and civil society;

8. Acknowledge the importance of Governments undertaking regional, subregional and national activities for the implementation of technical cooperation in the Asian and Pacific Region in accordance with the Framework for Regional Technical Cooperation in partnership with parliaments, national institutions, relevant experts and civil society organizations;

9. Note that within each of the areas of the Framework for Regional Technical Cooperation for the Asian and Pacific Region, it is appropriate to pay close attention to the promotion and protection of the rights of women, children and vulnerable groups;

10. Welcome the proposal made by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to continue the implementation of the Framework for Regional Technical Cooperation for the Asian and Pacific Region;

11. Welcome the intention of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to invite United Nations partner agencies to carry out some of the activities discussed during the Workshop;

12. Propose that the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights undertake an evaluation of the implementation of the Tehran Framework so far and report to the next annual workshop;

13. Invite parliaments, national institutions and civil society groups to participate, as appropriate, in the development and implementation of the Framework for Regional Technical Cooperation for the Asian and Pacific Region;

14. Undertake to disseminate among appropriate government agencies and institutions and other partners at the national level, as well as at the regional and subregional levels, the results of the Eight Workshop and to initiate joint efforts towards the implementation of these conclusions;

15. Call upon the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to report on progress achieved in the implementation of technical cooperation in the Asian and Pacific region in accordance with the Framework for Regional Technical Cooperation to the Ninth Workshop. The Workshop took note of the offers made by the Governments of Thailand and Mongolia to host the next annual workshop;

16. Endorse and consider for action the next steps and activities as included in the annex to the present conclusions.

Annex to the conclusions

NEXT STEPS AND ACTIVITIES TO BE CONSIDERED IN THE ASIAN AND PACIFIC REGION TO FACILITATE THE PROCESS OF REGIONAL COOPERATION FOR THE PROTECTION AND PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS[1]

Participants in the Eighth Workshop on Regional Arrangements for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Asian and Pacific region, held in Beijing from 1 to 3 March 2000, recommend that the following framework be implemented over a 24-month period, subject to review by the next Workshop in 2001, in order to further the process of regional cooperation in the field of human rights in the Asian and Pacific region, bearing in mind preparations for the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance which will take place in August/September 2001.

It is proposed that the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, in cooperation with United Nations agencies and programmes and, as appropriate, with regional, subregional and national partners, will:

I. NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS PLANS OF ACTION AND NATIONAL CAPACITY-BUILDING

Regional level

- Disseminate the handbook, containing "Possible elements to facilitate the development of national action plans for the promotion and protection of human rights that could be considered by countries which wish to include a national plan of action as part of their approach to human rights observance", when available during 2000, to States, national institutions and NGOs in the Asian and Pacific region;[2]

- In identifying participants for United Nations training initiatives on reporting to the human rights treaty bodies, shall give priority to candidates from States in the region which are in need of immediate assistance in drafting reports, in particular to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Committee on the Rights of the Child;[3]

Subregional level

- Organize, in cooperation with a host State and in cooperation, if appropriate, with the Association of South-East Asian Nations, one subregional workshop for Governments, national institutions and civil society, facilitated by experts (to include specialists from the subregion), on exploring the process of national human rights planning, with special emphasis on eradicating poverty, combating racism, and the realization of the rights of women and children. The workshop shall provide concrete assistance to States in the subregion and shall adopt a pilot methodology with a view to its refinement and future implementation elsewhere in the region;

- Organize, in cooperation with a host State, a subregional technical workshop on human rights for parliaments, with special emphasis on combating racism and on the realization of the rights of women and children;

- Encourage States, United Nations agencies and programmes and other partners to develop and implement further activities at the subregional level to promote effective national human rights action planning and human rights capacity development, with a focus on eradicating poverty, combating racism, and promoting the rights of women and children, and shall offer technical cooperation and advisory services in these fields;

National level

- Provide technical assistance supporting the development of national human rights plans of action, including in Thailand, Mongolia, Nepal and Jordan;[4]

- Make available, upon request, technical cooperation and advisory services to support the development of national human rights plans of action;

- Make available, upon request, technical cooperation and advisory services to develop national human rights capacity, especially with regard to the administration of justice, legislative reform, promotion of ratification of human rights instruments and human rights skills development in civil society,

II. HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

Regional level

- In the framework of the mid-term review of the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education, conduct and disseminate the results of surveys on human rights education materials, organizations and programmes in the Asian and Pacific region, including a collection of examples of activities undertaken in the first half of the Decade at all levels, and on funding agencies and resources for human rights education in the region,

- Conduct and publish a study on popular and non-formal human rights education methodologies used in the region, paying particular attention to those which are directed to vulnerable, disadvantaged and marginalized groups,

Subregional level

- Organize, in cooperation with a host State, three subregional workshops for Governments, national institutions and civil society, facilitated by experts (to include educationalists, human rights specialists and other relevant professionals from the relevant subregions), to develop: (a) subregion-specific human rights training programmes for those involved in the administration of justice; (b) subregion-specific strategies to direct human rights education to vulnerable, disadvantaged and marginalized groups; (c) subregion-specific strategies for promotion of human rights education within the school system. The workshops shall provide concrete assistance to States in the two subregions and shall adopt a pilot methodology with a view to its refinement and future implementation elsewhere in the region,

- Organize, in cooperation with a host State, a subregional technical training workshop on human rights for the judiciary, with special emphasis on economic, social and cultural rights, combating racism, and the realization of the rights of women and children,

- Encourage States, United Nations agencies and programmes and other partners to develop and implement further activities at the subregional level to promote effective human rights education and offer technical cooperation and advisory services in this regard. OHCHR shall draw priority attention to the directing of human rights training to personnel in the administration of justice and the delivery of human rights education to vulnerable, disadvantaged and marginalized groups and sectors,

National level

- Make available, upon request, technical cooperation and advisory services to support the development of national action plans for human rights education and/or the education component of overall national human rights plans of action, and for the development of sectoral-based human rights education;

III. NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTIONS

Regional level

- Support the annual meetings of the Asia-Pacific Forum of national institutions, the agendas of which (in 2000) will highlight the role and mandate of national institutions in combating racism, participation in preparations for the World Conference, and other human rights issues in accordance with previously agreed conclusions;

- In cooperation with regional national institutions, initiate the first phase of a training programme on protection approaches[5] and appropriate follow-up activities;

Subregional level

- Provide support to the inter-sessional workshop on the role of national institutions in the protection and promotion of women's human rights in Fiji and one other workshop on the media and human rights education;

- Co-organize the second national institutions training course on economic, social and cultural rights and related follow-up activities;

National level

- In cooperation with main partners in the States and the region, including the Asia-Pacific Forum, continue cooperation for the establishment and strengthening of national institutions, particularly in those States which have requested assistance from OHCHR;

- In its work concerning national institutions, encourage activities for the promotion and protection of the rights of women, children and vulnerable groups;[6]

IV. REALIZATION OF THE RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Regional level

- Organize, in cooperation with a host State, one regional workshop for Governments, national institutions and civil society to explore the impact of globalization on the full enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development, especially in relation to vulnerable segments of society. The workshop shall focus on

the sharing of relevant experience in maximizing the benefits of globalization while minimizing its negative impacts, including in the context of international development cooperation, the workshop's proceedings will be reflected in an expert study;

Subregional level

- Organize, in cooperation with a host State, one subregional workshop for Governments, national institutions and civil society, facilitated by experts (including members of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and experts from the subregion), on ratification of international treaties, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and its implications in terms of reporting obligations, legislation and practice, as well as of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. The workshop shall provide concrete assistance to States in the subregion and shall adopt a pilot methodology with a view to its refinement and future implementation elsewhere in the region;

- Organize, in cooperation with a host State, one subregional workshop involving national planning authorities, relevant ministries, national institutions and representatives of civil society to explore means to integrate human rights in national development plans. The workshop shall adopt a pilot methodology with a view to its refinement and future implementation elsewhere in the region;

- Encourage States, United Nations agencies and programmes and other partners to develop and implement further activities at the subregional level to promote effective realization of the right to development and economic, social and cultural rights, and offer technical cooperation and advisory services in this regard;

National level

- Make available, upon request, its technical cooperation and advisory services to assist in the realization of economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development through national development plans or national human rights action plans, in cooperation, where possible, with development organizations;

V. ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES IN CONNECTION WITH PREPARATIONS FOR THE WORLD CONFERENCE AGAINST RACISM, RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, XENOPHOBIA AND RELATED INTOLERANCE

- In addition to the range of activities described above, facilitate and encourage regional and subregional preparatory activities, including expert seminars and a regional preparatory meeting.

Notes

[1] The implementation of proposed activities by OHCHR is subject to the availability of resources from within the Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights.

[2] Already funded.

[3] Already funded.

[4] Already funded.

[5] Already funded, follow-up to project RAS/98/AH/16.

[6] Activities proposed at the national level will be considered for inclusion in nationally executed project activities.